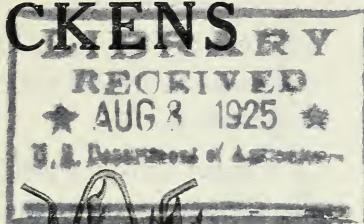


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HOW TO PICK CHICKENS



Miscellaneous Circular No. 42

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

BADLY picked chickens cause a money loss of 2 to 6 cents a pound. Torn skins, rubbed skins, "burnt" wings and legs, bloody hips, pin feathers that show, and discolored necks are evidences of careless dressing.

Why not turn out a perfectly dressed bird, like the one shown on the title page of this circular?

Much of the loss results from "roughing," and rubbing the skin after the quills and most of the soft feathers are removed.

This circular tells how to "rough" properly. The few feathers, pins, and down remaining should be picked out by the "tipper," or "pinner."

Follow the order of feather removal shown herein, otherwise blood will settle in necks and hips.

Proper braining is an essential to easy dry picking. Follow U. S. Department of Agriculture's explicit directions for proper bleeding and braining.¹

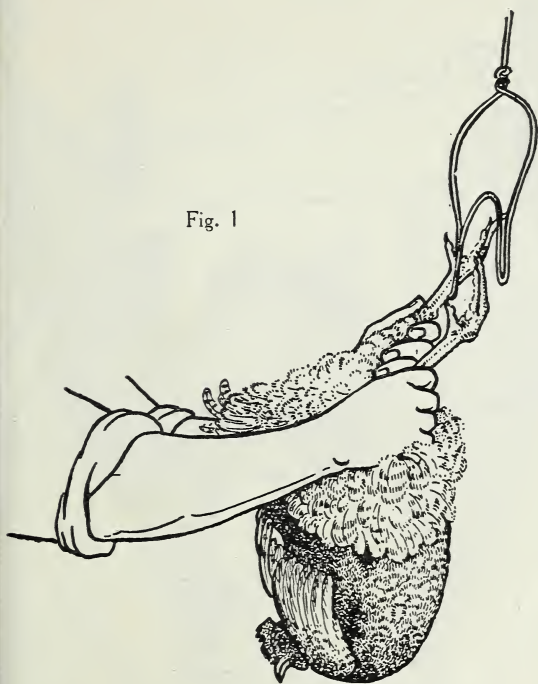
¹ How to Kill and Bleed Market Poultry. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Chemistry, Circular 61, revised.

This circular is a revision of an unnumbered circular of the Bureau of Chemistry, issued in 1918.

Washington, D. C.

Issued July 8, 1925

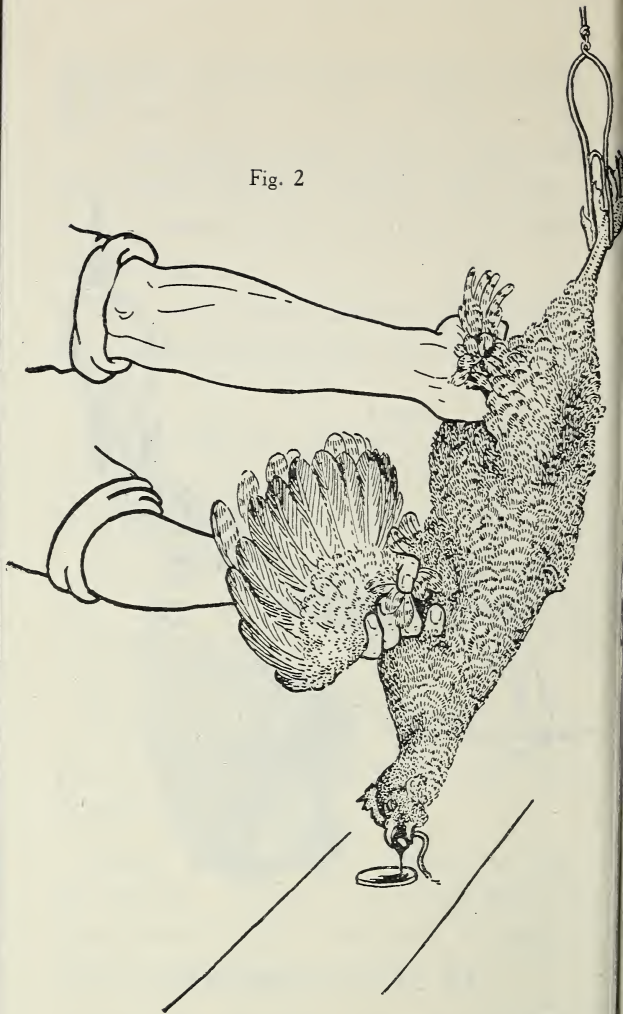
Fig. 1



THE PICKING SHACKLE

This shackle, made of galvanized wire $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter, is suspended by a cord. With the feet in the shackle the wings of the bird should be level with your elbows.

Fig. 2

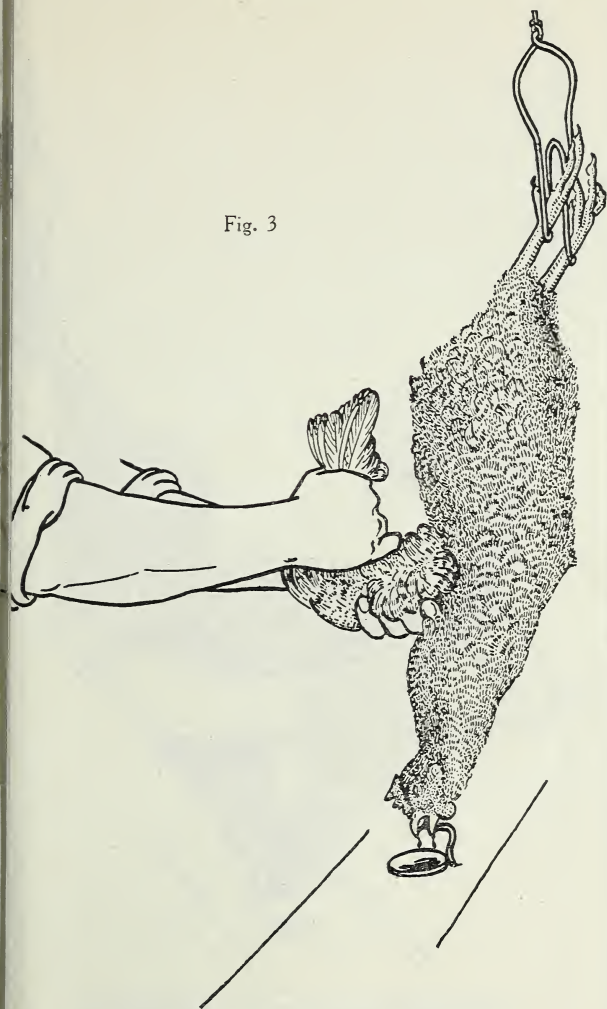


PULL TAIL FEATHERS FIRST

As soon as the throat vein is cut and the brain punctured, grasp the wings in the left hand. Be sure not to clasp the neck with the fore finger, which would stop the flow of blood.

Grasp the tail with the right hand—thumb down—then turn the wrist and twist out the feathers as the fist turns upward.

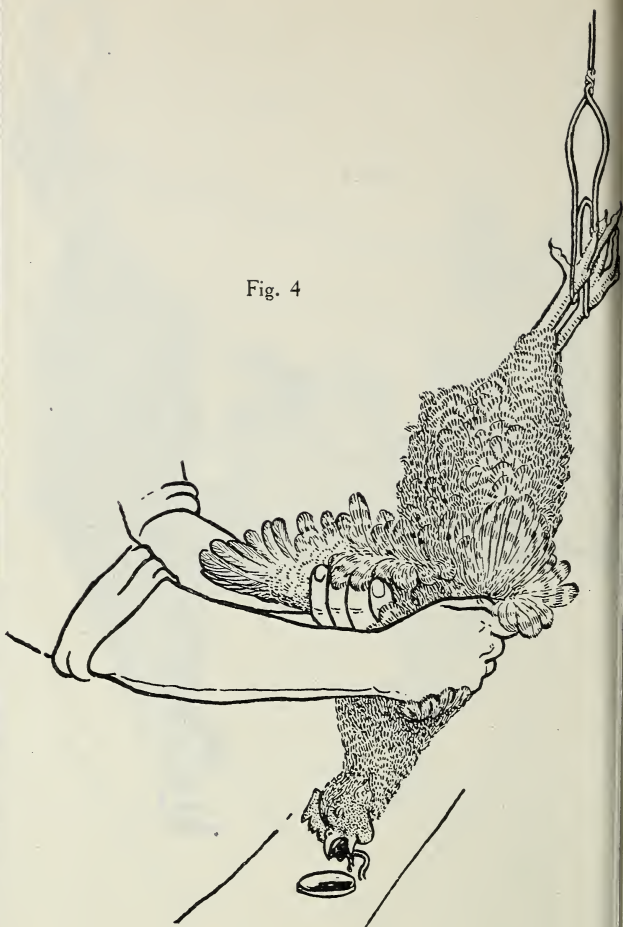
Fig. 3



LARGE WING FEATHERS NEXT

Pull the large wing feathers next. Hold the hand with the thumb upward. Grasp as many feathers as you can in one hand. Jerk them out with a sharp, quick downward movement. One grab for small birds—two for large.

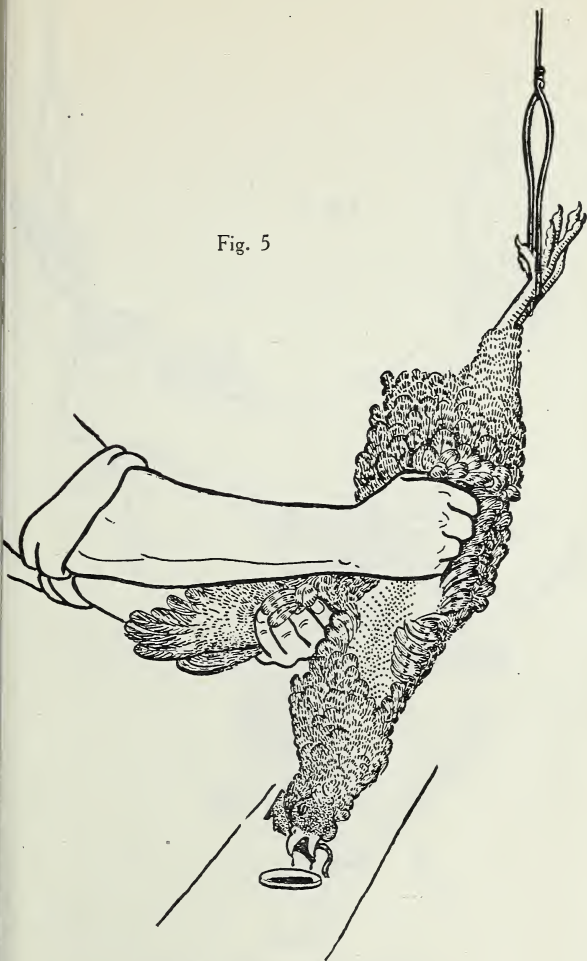
Fig. 4



PLUCKING BREAST AND SIDES

Now for the breast and sides. Begin at the wishbone. Take large handfuls. Seize the feathers while the arm is in upward motion, with the whole fist, thumb upward. Pull up and out, twisting the forearm outward.

Fig. 5



PREVENTING TORN SKINS

Work up to the thighs, taking large fistfuls of feathers and being sure to pull upward and twist the forearm outward while the whole arm moves upward. It's the upward motion and twist that turns the trick and prevents torn skins. Do one side first, then the other.

Fig. 6

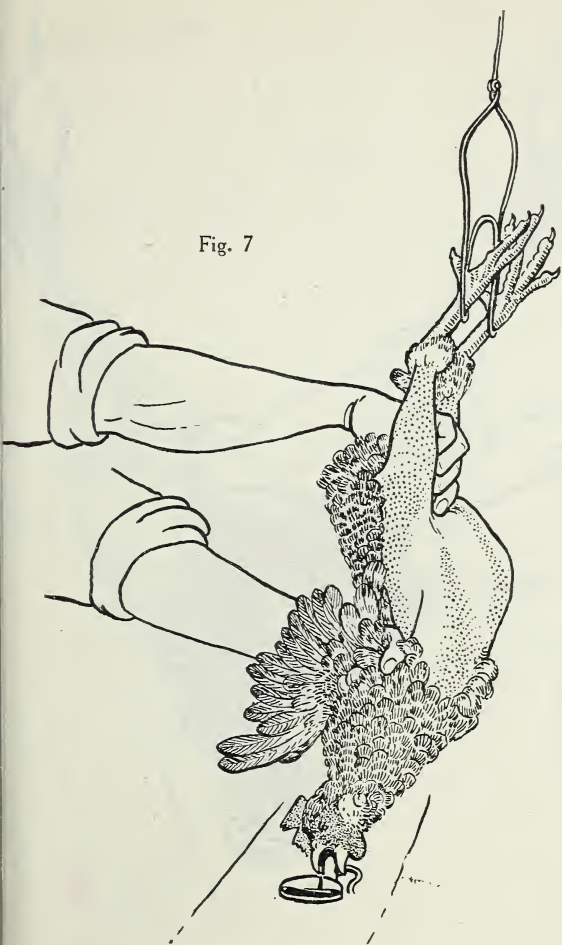


STRIPPING THE LEGS

The legs come next. Clasp the leg firmly at its base. Keep the thumb upward. Move the closed hand along the leg, pressing hard enough to strip the feathers. Be sure to work in the direction of the feathers, and strip only once! Feathers left must be picked out.

Continued stripping "burns" the skin, causing it to turn brown on cooling.

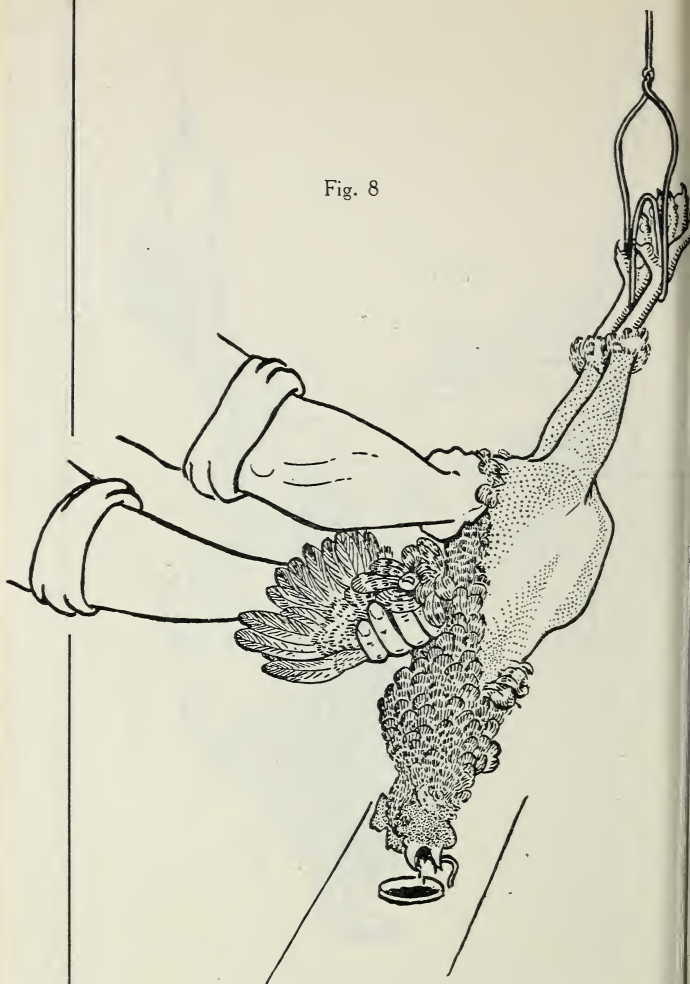
Fig. 7



THE SOFT BODY FEATHERS

As the shackle holds the legs apart, it's easy to slip the hand between them to pull the soft body feathers. Pull up and toward the body of the picker.

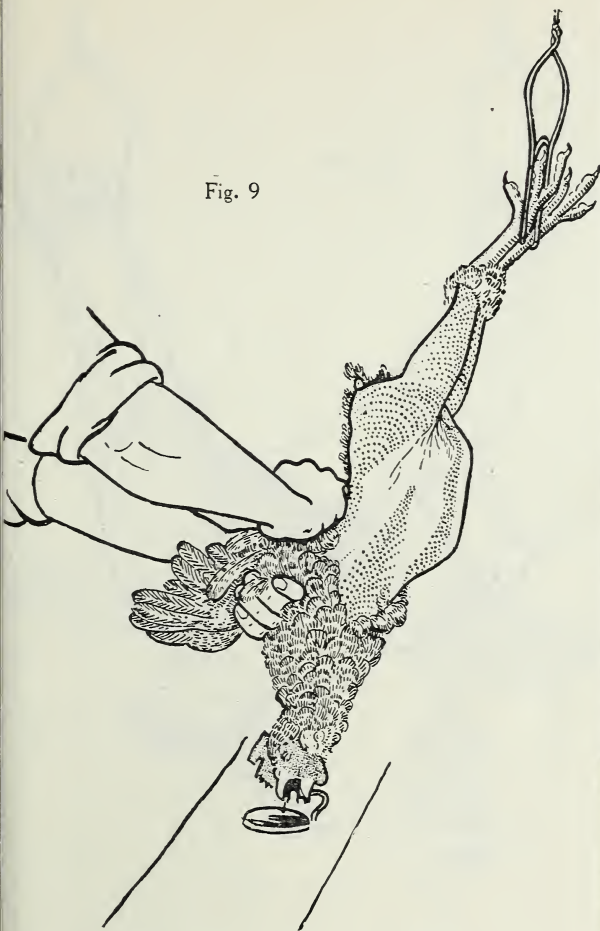
Fig. 8



BACK AND HIP FEATHERS

The trick in removing the back and hip feathers is to grasp the feathers with the palm of the hand outward, and then rotate the forearm inward. This makes a sort of scraping motion, and out come the feathers. Study the picture.

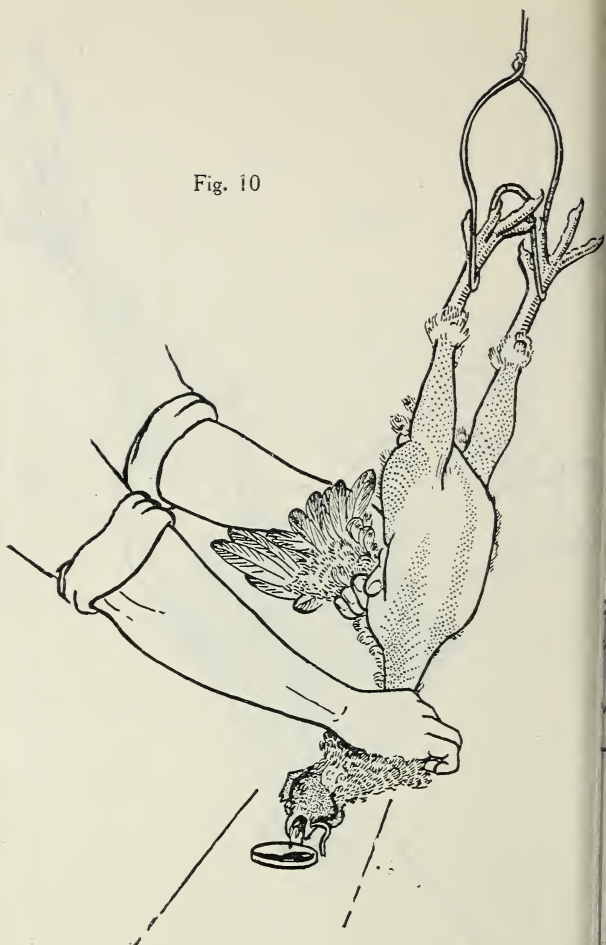
Fig. 9



SCRAPING THE BACK

Here is the hand in the act of scraping. Do you see the way the forearm is turned inward? Pull out the little feathers between the shoulders with thumb and forefinger.

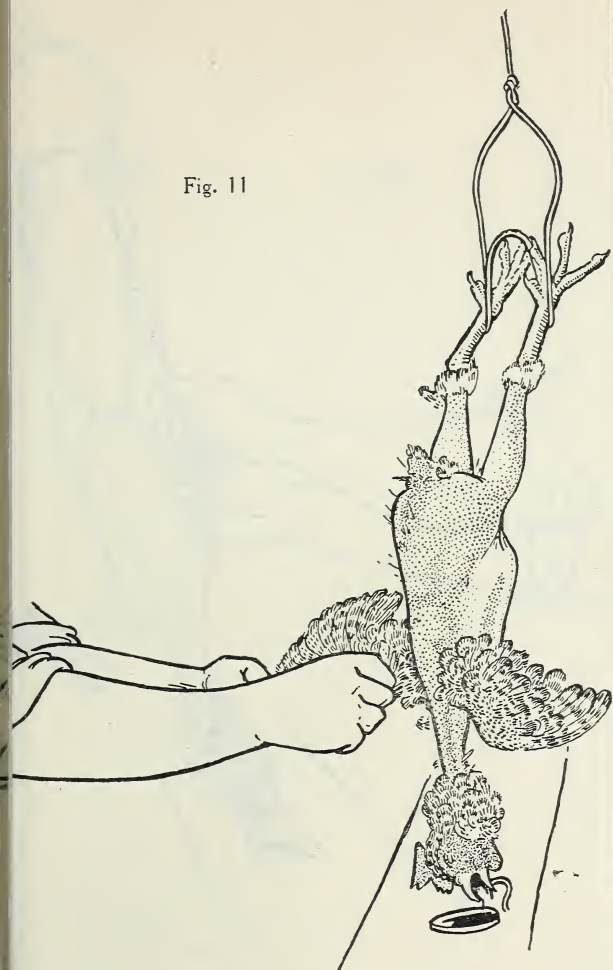
Fig. 10



AND NOW FOR THE NECK

This is the time to strip the neck. Clasp the neck, thumb upward, around the base. Strip by sweeping downward. Sometimes two sweeps are needed—one on the upper, the other on the lower half of the neck. Any feathers left must be picked out.

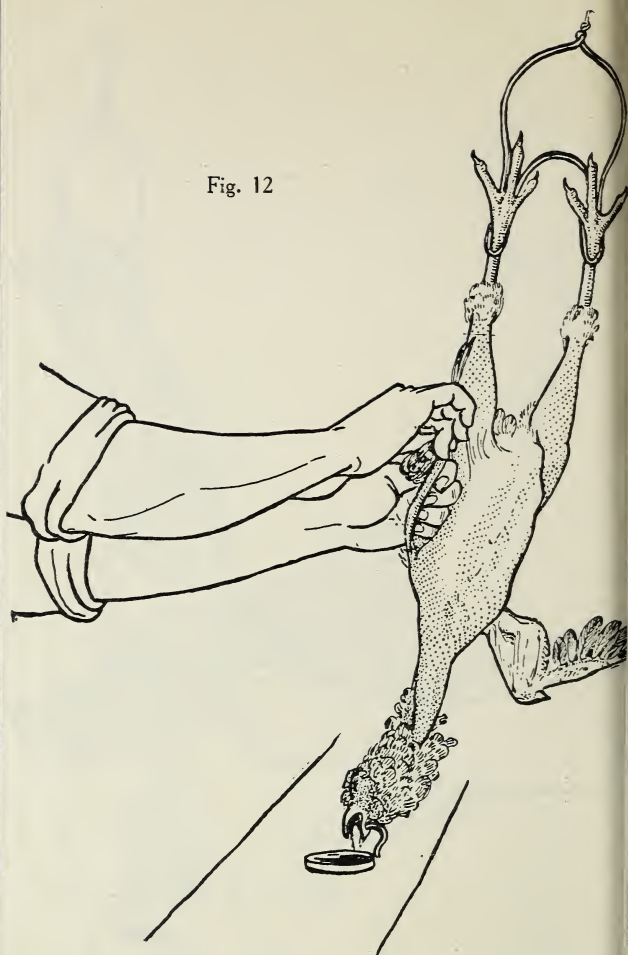
Fig. 11



THE SMALL FEATHERS ON THE WINGS

Great care must be taken with the small wing feathers, especially near the body. Stretch the wing as shown. Pick the medium-sized, soft feathers on the broad surfaces in small bunches with thumb and forefinger. If the bunches are too large the skin will be torn.

Fig. 12



WING EDGES AND WEBS

Hold the wing in a vertical position with the thumb and forefinger pinching the second joint from the body. With thumb and forefinger moving downward against the direction of the feathers remove the small feathers on edges and web. The stiff feathers and fans are pulled one at a time by bending sharply downward and jerking quickly.



